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**Handbook of**

# **PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY**

*Edited by:* **Angus C. Cameron | Richard P. Widmer**

**Fifth Edition**



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# Handbook of Pediatric Dentistry

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Foreword vii

Preface viii

Contributors x

Acknowledgements xiii

Contributors to previous editions xiv

- 1 **The philosophy of paediatric dentistry: What is paediatric dentistry?** 1  
Richard P. Widmer ■ Angus C. Cameron
- 2 **Child development, relationships and behaviour management** 14  
Richard P. Widmer ■ Daniel W. McNeil ■ Cheryl B. McNeil
- 3 **Pharmacological behaviour management** 29  
Eduardo A. Alcaïno ■ Benjamin Moran
- 4 **Dental caries** 56  
Svante Twetman
- 5 **Fluoride and dental health** 73  
Yasmin O. Crystal ■ John Featherstone
- 6 **Restorative paediatric dentistry** 89  
Nicola Innes ■ Mark Robertson ■ Clement Seeballuck ■ Mariana Pinheiro Araujo
- 7 **Pulp therapy for primary and immature permanent teeth** 130  
Erin Mahoney ■ Angus C. Cameron
- 8 **Clinical and surgical techniques** 152  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Stephen Fayle
- 9 **Trauma management** 183  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Marc Semper ■ Andrew A.C. Heggie ■ Paul Abbott
- 10 **Paediatric oral medicine, oral pathology and radiology** 241  
Anastasia Georgiou ■ Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer
- 11 **Dental anomalies** 306  
Mike Harrison ■ Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer
- 12 **Management of medically compromised paediatric patients** 368  
Marcio A. da Fonseca ■ Evelina Kratunova
- 13 **Children with special needs** 435  
Neeta Prabhu ■ Wendy J. Bellis ■ Angus C. Cameron
- 14 **Management of cleft lip and palate** 460  
Julia Dando
- 15 **Speech, language and swallowing** 477  
Sarah Starr

## APPENDICES

- A Blood and serum testing and investigations 488**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran ■ Mark Schifter
- B Paediatric life support 492**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer
- C Management of anaphylaxis 494**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- D Management of acute asthma 497**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- E Fluid and electrolyte balance 500**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- F Antibiotic prophylaxis protocols for the prevention of infective endocarditis 505**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- G Glasgow Coma Scale 509**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- H Common drugs usage in paediatric dentistry 510**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- I Radiography in children 515**  
Johan Aps
- J Ethics in paediatric dentistry 523**  
Richard Steffen
- K Somatic growth and maturity 527**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- L Growth charts 531**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- M Eruption dates of teeth 537**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- N Construction of family pedigree 540**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- O Calculating fluoride values for dental products 541**  
Angus C. Cameron ■ Richard P. Widmer ■ Benjamin Moran
- P COVID-19 and paediatric dentistry 542**  
Stephen Fayle

# The philosophy of paediatric dentistry: What is paediatric dentistry?

Richard P. Widmer ■ Angus C. Cameron

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### What is paediatric dentistry?

#### Patient assessment: history

Current complaints  
Dental history  
Medical history  
Pregnancy (obstetric) history  
Growth and development  
Current medical treatment  
Family and social history

#### Examination

Extraoral examination  
Intraoral examination

#### Occlusion and orthodontic relations

Dental relationships  
Molar relationship  
Incisor relationship

#### Special examinations

Radiography and other imaging  
Pulp sensibility testing

Blood investigations  
Microbiological investigations  
Anatomical pathology  
Photography  
Diagnostic casts  
Caries activity tests

#### Steps in diagnosis

#### Assessment of disease risk

Low risk of disease  
Moderate risk  
High risk or future high risk  
Treatment plan

#### Clinical conduct

Infection control  
Recording of clinical notes  
Consent for treatment  
Special notes regarding oral healthcare for children in the hospital setting

## What is paediatric dentistry?

Paediatric dentistry is a specialty based not on a particular skill set, but rather encompassing all dentistry's technical skills against a philosophical background of understanding child development in health and disease. This latest edition of the handbook emphasizes again the broader picture in treating children ([Appendix J](#)). A dental visit is no longer just a dental visit; it should be regarded as a 'health visit'. We are part of the team of health professionals who contribute to the well-being of children, both in an individual context and at the wider community level. Children often slip through childhood to adolescence seemingly in the blink of an eye, and family life is more pressured and demanding. Commonly, children spend more time on social media than



**Figure 1.1** The dental visit should be a positive experience. Children with special needs may present different challenges in their care; however, their involvement and joy are the greatest reward.

interacting directly with family and friends, and more than ever, the major influences on their lives come from outside the family.

The pattern of childhood illness has changed, and, with it, clinical practice. Children presenting for treatment may have survived cancer, may have a well-managed chronic disease or may have significant behavioural and learning disorders (Figure 1.1). There are increasing, sometimes unrealistic, expectations among parents/carers that the care of their children should be easily and readily accessible and pain-free and result in flawless aesthetics.

Caries and dental disease should be seen as reflective of the family's social condition, and the dental team should be part of the community.

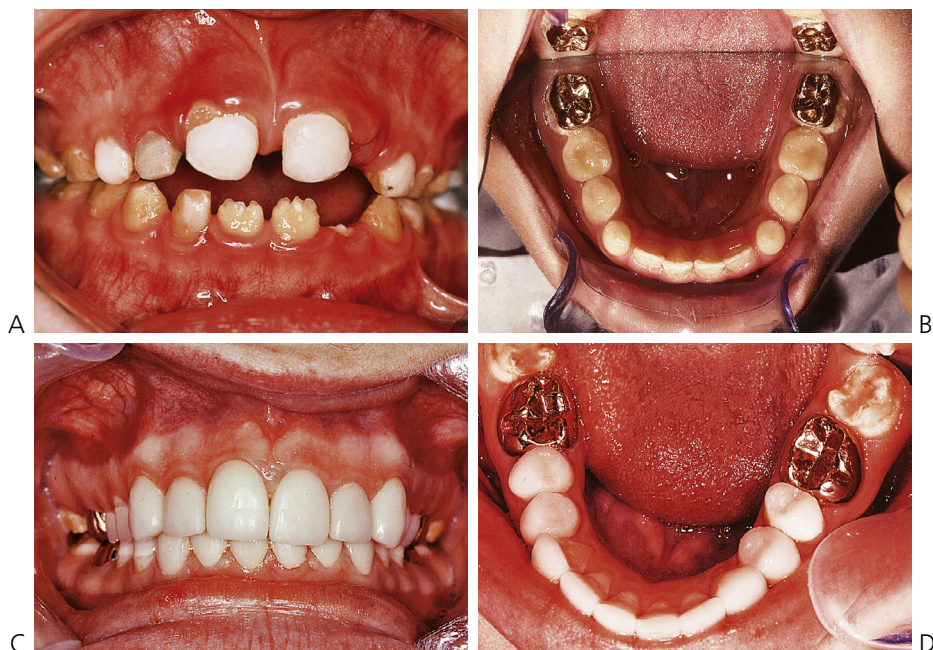
*Your [patients] don't have to become your friends, but they are part of your social context and that gives them a unique status in your life. Treat them with respect and take them seriously and your practice will become to feel part of the neighbourhood, part of the community.*

(HUGH MACKAY, PSYCHOLOGIST, SOCIAL RESEARCHER AND NOVELIST)

In the evolving dynamics of dental practice, we feel that it is important to change, philosophically, the traditional 'adversarial nature' of the dental experience. It is well recognized that for too many, the dental experience has been traumatic. This has resulted in a significant proportion of the adult population accessing dental care only episodically, for the relief of pain. Thus, it is vital to see a community, and consumer, perspective in the provision of paediatric dental services. The successful practice of paediatric dentistry is not merely the completion of any operative procedure but also ensuring a positive dental outcome for the future oral health behaviour of that individual and family. To this end, an understanding of child development – physical, cognitive and psychosocial – is paramount. The clinician must be comfortable and skilled in talking to children, and interpersonal skills are essential.

## Patient assessment: history

A clinical history should be taken in a logical and systematic way for each patient and should be updated regularly. Thorough history-taking is a skill. It may be time consuming and requires practice. However, it is an opportunity to get to know the child and family. Furthermore, the history facilitates the diagnosis of many conditions, even before the clinical examination. There are often specific questions pertinent to a child's medical history that will be relevant to their management, thus it is desirable that parents be present. The understanding of medical conditions that can compromise treatment is essential, and this will be expanded on in later chapters. Be aware that the parent(s) or carer(s) may be unaware of the full medical and/or social history of the child. This may be the case in those children who are adopted or are the offspring of differing social arrangements.



**Figure 11.37** (A) Not all cases using composite resin are successful. With progressive eruption of the teeth, it is difficult for the patient to keep the gingival margins clean and the restoration may therefore fail. (B) Cast gold onlays are useful to protect the occlusal surfaces. No preparation of the crown was performed. (C, D) Onlays, veneers and composite crowns were cemented with composite luting cement.

possible, but it is difficult to predict how useful this information would be to an affected individual or family. Counselling may be helpful in some circumstances, provided it is given by someone with the appropriate training.

#### CLINICAL HINTS: BONDING TO ABNORMAL ENAMEL

- Acid-etch composite resin seems to bond more successfully to hypoplastic enamel than to hypomineralized enamel.
- In severely affected dentitions, it is preferable to place preformed metal crowns on primary molar teeth very early (e.g., at around 3–4 years of age) to preserve the vertical dimension and allow maximal eruption of the first permanent molar.
- Cast metal (precious or base-metal) onlays on suitable permanent posterior teeth have the best long-term clinical success.
- Regular radiographic examination is required to detect early caries.

## Disorders of dentine

### DENTINOGENESIS IMPERFECTA (OMIM 125490) (Figure 11.38)

Dentinogenesis imperfecta is an inherited disorder of dentine, which may or may not be associated with osteogenesis imperfecta. The term ‘hereditary opalescent dentine’ is sometimes used for the isolated condition. Both osteogenesis imperfecta and dentinogenesis imperfecta are transmitted as autosomal dominant traits and are clinically indistinguishable dentally, although they have a different genetic basis. Osteogenesis imperfecta is caused by mutations in the type I collagen



**Figure 11.38** Manifestations of dentinogenesis imperfecta. (A) Dentinogenesis imperfecta. Dark discolouration of the crowns which appear normal in size and shape. (B) Severe attrition in the primary dentition in a case of dentinogenesis imperfecta. (C) Blue sclera associated with osteogenesis imperfecta. (D) Primary dentition in a child with osteogenesis imperfecta.

genes (e.g., *COL1A1*, *COL1A2*) and dentinogenesis imperfecta to mutations in the dentine sialophosphoprotein I gene (*DSPP*). Some individuals and families with osteogenesis imperfecta may have clinical evidence of dentinogenesis imperfecta, but in other families there may be variable expression of the trait. Within these families, some individuals may have abnormal dentine, while others are clinically unaffected as far as the teeth are concerned. However, because of the same collagen defect, all such children with osteogenesis imperfecta may have abnormal dentine, albeit at a subclinical level. The possibility of osteogenesis imperfecta should be considered in children presenting with dentinogenesis imperfecta and investigated by measurement of bone density if necessary. The presence of blue sclera or a history of bone fractures should alert the clinician to osteogenesis imperfecta.

### Dental manifestations

- Amber, grey to purple-bluish discolouration or opalescence (Figure 11.38).
- Pulpal obliteration (Figure 11.39).
- Relatively bulbous crowns.
- Short, narrow roots.
- Enamel may be lost after tooth eruption, exposing the soft dentine, which rapidly wears. This is probably because of inherent weakness in the dentine rather than because of an enamel defect or abnormality at the dentinoenamel junction.
- Mantle dentine appears normal.
- Circumpulpal dentine is poorly formed with abnormal direction of tubules. Small soft tissue inclusions represent remnants of pulpal tissue.

- primary teeth (*Continued*)
  - pulp medicaments, 140
  - pulpotomy, indications for, 140
  - technique, 140
  - restorative dentistry. *See* restorative dentistry
  - role of, 131
  - splinting, [192](#)
  - trauma sequelae, 205f, 206
    - primary root apex displacement, 204, 204f
  - treatment options for, 149t
- primary teeth, pulpotomy in
  - therapeutic agents used for, 142
    - electrosurgery, 143
    - ferric sulphate, 142
    - formocresol, 143
    - mineral trioxide aggregate, 142
- proband, 540
- procedure timing, 23
- profound dehydration, 502
- proliferation disorders, 316
- propofol, 51
- prosthesis, cleft lip and/or palate, 475
- protective clothing, 23
- prothrombin time (PT), 373
- provisional diagnosis, [7](#), [10](#)
- proximal sealants, 127
- pseudohypoparathyroidism, 416
- psychiatrists, 27
- psychologists, 27
- psychostimulant medication, ADHD, 438
- pubertal growth spurt, 529
- pubertal voice, 529
- puberty, 529
- pulmonary atresia, 370
- pulmonary disease, 425
- pulmonary stenosis, 372
- pulp capping, 138
  - direct pulp capping, 139
    - immature permanent teeth, 139
    - primary teeth, 139
  - indications, 138
  - indirect pulp capping, 138
  - technique, 138
- pulp extirpation, inflammatory root resorption, 229
- pulp necrosis, 132, 134f, 145, 148
  - intrusion, 224
  - primary incisor crown fractures, 202
  - primary teeth
    - discolouration, 205f, 206
    - root fractures. *See* root fractures
- pulp regeneration, 213, 214f
- pulp sensibility testing, [9](#), 135
  - complicated crown fractures, 209
  - luxation, permanent dentition, 224
  - trauma, 191
- pulp sensibility tests, 135
- pulp status, clinical investigations to determine, 135
- pulp therapy, 130–131, 136, 138, 142–143, 145–146, 148
  - clinical assessment and general considerations, 131
- pulp therapy (*Continued*)
  - chronic infection and irreversible pulpitis, signs and symptoms of, 134
  - clinical investigations to determine pulp status, 135
  - irreversible pulpitis, 132
  - coronal seal, 137
  - current practice, evidence for, 131
  - endodontics versus extraction in immature
    - permanent teeth, 148
  - first permanent molar extraction, orthodontic considerations for, 148
  - follow-up, 150
  - timing of extractions, 148
  - grossly carious/necrotic immature permanent teeth, treatment planning for, 145
  - immature permanent tooth, pulpotomy in, 146
    - clinical criteria, 147
    - technique, 147
  - primary teeth, decision to retain/restore/extract, 136
    - behavioural considerations, 136
    - contraindications, 136
    - dental considerations, 137
    - indications, 136
    - medical considerations, 136
  - primary teeth, role of, 131
    - anatomical and morphological considerations in, 131
  - space maintenance, 131
- pulp capping, 138
  - direct pulp capping, 139
  - indications, 138
  - indirect pulp capping, 138
  - technique, 138
- pulpectomy in primary teeth, 143
  - indications for pulpectomy in primary teeth, 145
  - obturation, 145
  - root canal morphology, 143
  - technique, 145
- pulpotomy in primary teeth, 139, 140f
  - caries removal, 139
  - Cvek. *See* Cvek pulpotomy
  - final tooth restoration, 140
  - haemostasis, 139
  - indications for, 140
  - pulp medicaments, 140
  - technique, 140
  - therapeutic agents used for, 142
    - electrosurgery, 143
    - ferric sulphate, 142
    - formocresol, 143
    - mineral trioxide aggregate, 142
- pulp vitality testing. *See* pulp sensibility testing
- pulpal status, assessment of, 132t
- pulpotomy in primary teeth, 139, 143
  - general technical considerations, 143
  - obturation, 145
  - root canal morphology, 143
  - indications for pulpectomy in primary teeth, 145
  - technique, 145